THE BUDDHIST

JUNE, 1957

Vol. XXVIII, No. 2

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THE BUDDHIST

(*Organ of the Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association*)

"Sīla Paññānato Jayam"

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MIHINTALE—THE CENTRE OF BUDDHIST PILGRIMAGE IN JUNE

MIHINTALE hill, situated about eight miles to the east of Anurādhapura rises over a thousand feet above the surrounding plain. It was to the summit of this hill that, in the 3rd century B.C. the Arahant Mahinda arrived with his retinue,—Uttiya, Iṭṭhiya, Sambala, Bhaddasāla, the four monks Sumana, the novice, and Bhanduka, the lay devotee to fulfil his mission of propagating the doctrine of the Buddha for the benefit of the people of Ceylon.

The day of the arrival of Mahinda coincided with a festival in Ceylon and its ruler, Devānampiya Tissa, attended by his followers went to Mihintale to celebrate the occasion by indulging in the favourite pastime of the nobility at the time, the deer-hunt. The Saint, on seeing the King, accosted him, and after a brief conversation with him realized that the King was sharp-witted. He preached to the King the Cūlahatthipadōpama Sutta, after which the King and his followers embraced Buddhism. Thus the summit of this hill became the cradle of Buddhism in Ceylon. Devānampiya Tissa became an ardent supporter of Buddhism, under whose patronage the religion began to flourish.

On this hill which was known as Missaka Pabbata, were temporarily enshrined in Cetiyas the relics brought by Sumana Sāmanera at the request of the King. Hence it came to be known as Cetiyagiri or Cetiya Pabbata. Its association with Mahinda caused it to be called Mahindatthala or Mihintale. The hillsides were precipitous except on the East, on which a broad flight of stone steps built in four stages lead the visitor from the foot to the summit. Devānampiya Tissa built a vihāra and sixty-eight rock-caves at the place for the use of the community. The rulers who followed him, too, lavished their piety on this sacred hill by erecting religious monuments, ponds, hospitals and made the Cetiyapabbata Vihāra a well-maintained and well-provided monastery.

The ancient Cetiyapabbatārāma comprised a large area surrounding this hill. But for purposes of archaeological work only 144 acres have been reserved and cleared. From the Mihintale-Galkulama Road a gravel road branching off near the Mihintale bazaar area leads to the foot of the hill where the visitor is suddenly confronted with the first lap of the broad flight of steps leading to the summit of the hill.

The area at the foot of the hill is now a pleasant mango grove where deer stray. This sight recalls to one's mind the historic meeting of King Devānampiya Tissa and Mahinda Thera.

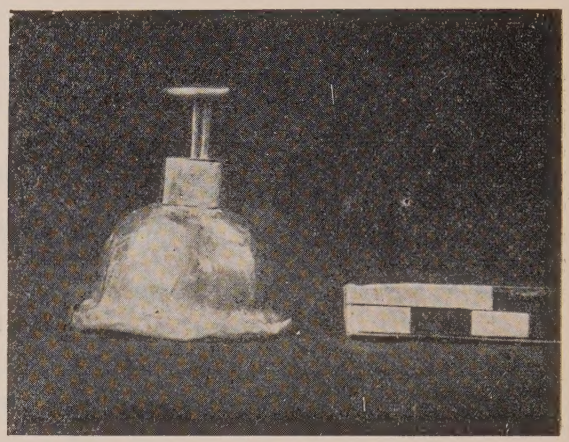
To the right of the gravel road leading from the bazaar to the stairway are to be seen the remains of a monastic hospital. A tenth-century inscription and a stone trough at the site go to establish that the site was that of a hospital. In the course of work at this site have been found two bluish glazed jars of Persian origin and a large broad-brimmed vessel of local manufacture. These jars which were in pieces were restored and are exhibited at the Archaeological Museum at Anurādhapura. A few yards further adjoining the stairway is another monastic site consisting of a main edifice at the centre and four subsidiary buildings at the corners, the whole group being enclosed by a prākāra. This in plan is very similar to many a site that is to be seen at Anurādhapura.

A few yards beyond this is the first lap of the broad flight of steps leading to the summit of the sacred hill. The Kaṇṭaka Cetiya to the right and an unidentified dāgāba to the left, both situated in commanding positions on the top of two hillocks, appear as if they are two sentinels guarding the entrance to the Cetiyapabbata Vihāra.

The Chronicles are silent as to who built the Kaṇṭaka Cetiya and as to the period when it was originally erected. But to King Lajjatissa, a first century ruler, is given the credit of making a stone mantle to this dāgāba. Thus it will be seen that this monument was one built shortly after the establishment of Buddhism in Ceylon. The vāhalkaḍas of this dāgāba contain better carvings than their counterparts in Anurādhapura. The sculptured stelae at either ends of these vāhalkaḍas are similar to the carvings on the Sānchi gateways and are the earliest specimens of the plastic art of the Sinhalese. The dāgāba, though not so large as the Anurādhapura dāgābas, yet has a dia-

Mihintale—the Cradle of Buddhism in Ceylon

A Buddha Image discovered at Mihintale

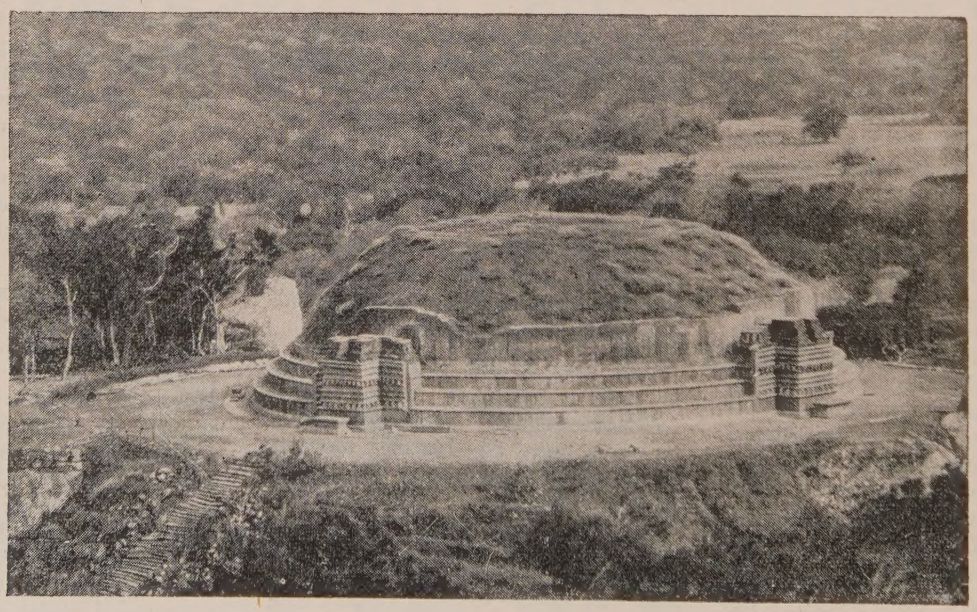


A relic casket discovered at Mihintale

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Pilgrims ascending Mihintale Hill

—Block by courtesy "Times"



Kaṇṭaka Cetiya, Mihintale

—(Blocks by courtesy Archaeological Department, Ceylon)

meter of 425 feet at its base. Originally it would have been over 100 feet in height. The vāhalkaḍas which were painted, the white dome and the glistening gilt pinnacle of this dāgāba would have been an awe-inspiring sight to one looking at it from the foot of the hill.

At the end of the third flight of steps are the remains of the refectory or Dānasālāva of the Cetiyapabbatārāma. Two large stone canoes are to be seen here just as in the refectories at Anurādhapura. Close to the refectory on a higher terrace are the remains of an image house on either side of the entrance of which are two large stone slabs containing two 10th century inscriptions of Mahinda IV. These contain the rules and regulations regarding the maintenance of the ārāma and give one an idea of the manner in which an ancient Buddhist *ārāma* was run. The inscription mentions that at this ārāma was a devāle for the goddess Mininā and this fact goes to prove that worship of images of gods existed side by side with that of the Buddha image even during the tenth century. In the same terrace as this vihāra but on the other side of the steps are the remains of the Sannipāta sālā where the community held its congregations.

In the valley to the East of the refectory is a pond known as Tiṁbiripokuṇa. To the east of this pond on a hillock is an unidentified dāgāba, in the relic chamber of which, were found frescoes datable to about the 8th century. These frescoes were detached together with the plaster on which they were painted and are now exhibited in the Archaeological Museum at Anurādhapura.

The fllight of steps becomes narrower from the terrace where the refectory is and leads up to a plateau on the summit of the hill. It was on this plateau, known as Ambasthala, that the historic meeting of Mahinda Thera and King Devānampiya Tissa took place. A modern Saṅghāvāsa and Dharmasālāva exist there. The remains of the Silācetiya built by King Makalantissa in the 1st century B.C. are to be seen on this plain. The spot on which the Sīlacetiya stood is said to have been hallowed by Lord Buddha on His third visit to the Island and is therefore one of the sixteen most sacred places of worship for the Buddhists. After the period in which Mihintale was abandoned to the jungles, the people could not even identify the various monuments situated on this hill. They mistook the Silācetiya and named it Ambasthala Dāgāba which name persists even today though there is satisfactory evidence to identify it as Silācetiya. The stone-work of this dāgāba has been covered by a coating of plaster in a later restoration.

In the 2nd century Kanitthatissa built a vaṭadāgē enclosing the Silācetiya. This edifice would perhaps have been a wooden one. The stone-pillars of the vaṭadāgē are the only remains of it that exist today. These support the view that it was a work of the seventh century. Perhaps this vaṭadāgē was built after the destruction of the earlier wooden one. Makalantissa is credited to have built an Uposathághara and planted a Bo-tree on this same plateau. But only the boundary stones of the Uposathaghara exist today.

On the rock face behind the modern Dharmasālāva is an inscription in Pallava Grantha characters of the seventh or eighth century containing a Mahāyānist śloka. This goes to prove that during this period Cetiyapabbatārāma was influenced by Mahāyānist doctrines.

To the south-east of this plateau, is seen a cave popularly known as Mahinda's Bed. Here a space on a rock sufficient for a person to sleep on, has been smoothed out and another rock on top is found sheltering the space from the elements. To the south-west of the Silācetiya is the Mahāsāya. The Chronicle gives a long account of this dāgāba built by Mahādātika Mahānāga in the first century. It is believed that the Urṇaroma of the Buddha is enshrined in this dāgāba and it is, therefore, greatly venerated as a place of Buddhist worship. This dāgāba, during modern times, had been restored twice but has again shown signs of collapse. The present Government too has now undertaken to restore this and ere long it will once again be one of the grandest sights crowning the top of the hill.

To the west of Mahāsāya beyond a modern image-house is the Mihiṅdusāya which has been excavated by the Archaeological Department recently. In the course of work, in the chamber which belonged to a later restoration in the 7th century or so, were discovered a unique Buddha image and an earthenware relic-casket in which was found enshrined a golden cylindrical tube placed on a flower, made of gold leaf. The contents of this tube which were not examined may most probably be Buddha relics. Another golden relic casket belonging to the time of the original foundation of this dāgāba—that is—about the 3rd century B.C. were found bones and ashes. No evidence has been found to identify as to whose remains these are, but Dr. Paranavitana in a report of his, states that they may very well be those of the Arahant Mahinda which were enshrined in a stūpa on the summit of the hill by King Uttiya.

Descending the hill-top one could see the Nāga Pokuṇa in a terrace below. Coming still further down, below the Sannipātasālā terrace the visitor will see the ancient "Lion Bath" or Siṃha Pokuṇa which Bell describes as "perhaps the best executed piece of spirited animal sculpture in the round to be seen anywhere in the Island." From near the "Lion-Bath" to the north, behind the Kaṇṭaka Cetiya, a fine view of some of the rock caves at Mihintale could be seen. Starting from the Convocation Hall terrace a path descends westwards and leads to the main road from Mihintale to Galkulama. A few yards to the right of the junction of this path and the high road are the remains of a monastery enclosed by a parapet built of large blocks of roughly dressed stones. Within this enclosure are to be seen remains of shrines, a large stone-faced bath and a dāgāba popularly called Iṅdikaṭusāya. In the course of conserving this stūpa were found inscribed copper plaques containing fragments from a Sanskrit Buddhist text of the Mahāyānists, the Pragñāpāramitā. These plaques indicate that this was a monastery of the Mahāyānists built during the ninth century.

To the west of this monastery is situated the Rājagirilena, a rocky hill, on whose summit are several caves bearing inscriptions dating back from early times. Bell in describing this place says, "a better hermitage for Buddhist monks could hardly be selected than the airy caverns. They provided every facility for quiet retreat." An inscription in the Nāgarī script of the ninth century found at the place goes to prove that this hermitage was occupied Mahāyānist monks in the ninth century.

About a quarter of a mile beyond this, a turn to the East into the jungle from the high road, leads the visitor to another group of remains skirting the Kaludiya Pokuṇa. Bell says in describing Kaludiya Pokuṇa, "The first peep of this delightful glen, as it suddenly bursts on the charmed gaze, is entrancing in its quiet picturesqueness. A more perfect sanctuary for 'the sons of Buddha' could not be found anywhere throughout the length and breadth of Ceylon." Around the marge of this lake has been laid out an extensive monastery. Inscriptions found at the site prove it to be an establishment of the 10th or 11th century. Bell hazards the suggestion that it may very well be the remains of the Hadayunha Vihāra built by Kassapa IV in the 10th century for the Dhammarucika community of monks.

Till the 13th century, this monastery of the 3rd century B.C. flourished amidst various vicissitudes that the Buddhist Sāsana underwent during these 1,600 years. In the 9th and 10th centuries it was under the influence of Mahāyānists. The gradual decay of this monastery started from the fall of Anurādhapura in the 11th century. In the 13th century when Polonnaruwa also came under the dominion of the Tamils, the royal princes and the nobility, through fear, fled to Ruhuna leaving such important monasteries as this, to fall into ruin. The Tamils plundered the riches from the monuments. After the 13th century, for a long period of over 600 years, the Mihintale monastery was forgotten by the people. The important dāgābas could not be identified by those who in the 19th century started clearing the ruins. The Mahāsāya is already under restoration and ere long Mihintale will once more regain its splendour of old.

W. S. K.

THE CREATIVE FORCE OF BUDDHISM

By Dr. DAVID FRIEDMAN,

Lecturer in Indian Philosophy, University of London.

IT is not so long ago that many scholars describing the Buddhist doctrine, emphasized its pessimistic, negative and life-denying character. In their opinion, the view of life, including its pleasures, as ill, sorrow or suffering (dukkha), with decay and impermanence (aniccatā, anityatā) as its central features, the suppression of all desires and craving as a means to the way out, the idea of Nibbāna (Nirvāna) as a total blowing out, the so-called denial of the personality (anattavāda) hardly afforded a stimulating and inspiring philosophy. They held that in this presentation it was all too lifeless and "soulless." Moreover, these scholars approached Buddhism as a dead and gone religion. They ignored the fact of its present existence as a vigorously living force in the lives of countless millions of men and women spread all over Asia..[1]

It is gratifying to contemplate that thanks to the immense joint-scholarly effort of the past forty years—in the West as well as in Asia—a totally different picture of Buddhism has emerged. Now the general trend in many publications, scholarly as well as popular, is the stressing of its joyful rather than its sorrowful character. It is described as a New Message, a New Gospel, a Universal Religion, a revolution or turning point in the social, cultural-religious and spiritual situation of India and Asia in particular and in the history of mankind in general. Its moral qualities, its "simplicity and directness" are exalted. Moreover, Buddhism is no longer seen merely as a way out, an escape. Its positive qualities are better understood, above all its transforming force and its civilizing power. It is obvious that this very power is entirely incompatible with a life-denying philosophy, Buddhist or otherwise. Whatever the real character of Buddhism was and is—and scholars are still steeped in controversy about the meaning and purport of its complex philosophical theories—one thing is certain. It was not only a highly original religious-philosophical doctrine and ethico-psychological discipline. It also became a civilization inspired by truly creative ideas, purifying and ennobling the lives of the peoples who embraced the Saddharma. And this happened on the popular as much as on the more advanced philosophical levels. No doubt the spread of Buddhism in its many ramifications and with its higher civilizing influence has been in keeping with the words of the Buddha: "Therefore, Bhikkhus, ye who have been taught by me the Dhamma which I have fully understood, having thoroughly made yourselves masters of them, practise them, meditate upon them, and spread them abroad in order that Brahma-faring may last long and be perpetuated, in order that it may continue to be for the good and happiness of the great multitudes, out of compassion for the world, and for the good and gain and happiness of gods and men."[2] The history of Buddhism, in so far as it is known today, is fraught with many paradoxes. Just like the path of the true Buddhist devotee himself, its career has been beset by many hindrances. For one thing, as mentioned in the beginning of this article, it has been frequently said that in spite of its positive, creative and civilizing influence, the Buddha's teaching is mainly negative. In a recent publication this has been formulated as follows: "Evil and suffering are brought into the forefront. Man's life is to be spent in a struggle against evil, and the ethical code is quite often, but not always, worded in terms of abstention from evil. Concentrated mental

1. Cf. R. L. Slater, Paradox and Nirvana, A. Study of religious ultimates with special reference to Burmese Buddhism, Chicago, 1951, p. 5.

2. Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, D.N., II, 119.

activity is emphasized and little is said about "doing things." The author observes that there is some truth in the criticism. For example, the oft quoted verse from the Dhammapada gives the teaching of love in negative form : Never in this world can hatred be stilled by hatred ; It will be stilled only by non-hatred—this is the law eternal.[3]

In contrast to this negative opinion, it is no exaggeration to say that the Buddhist doctrine of love and compassion (mettā, maitrī, karuṇā) is its most redeeming, creative and positive feature. It emanates directly from the Buddha himself and it has ever since been the binding link of virtually all forms of Buddhism. It became, as if it were, "crystallized" in the exercise of the four Brahma-vihāras, the four "Moods" of which the first seems to be the oldest and most genuine. This is described as follows : "Thus he stays whilst he suffuses the whole world above, below, across, on all sides, in all completeness with a mind of loving kindness, wide extended, immeasurable, without enmity, without ill-will ; with the liberation of the mind through loving kindness thus developed, he will not stay, he will not stop at what is finite . . . "[4] Space does not permit to quote again here from the Pāli scriptures the very large number of sayings exhorting the conscious practice of mettā. Only one, from the Itivuttaka, may be mentioned here : "Well it is with him who, with a guileless heart, shows friendly feeling even towards one living being only ; but the noble one who shows pity with all living creatures acquires abundant religious merit." This spirit of loving kindness, as expressed here, is the direct counterpart of the idea of karuṇā which is the essence of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Whatever book of the enormous mass of Mahāyāna literature one opens, almost at random, its central themes, love, compassion, self-sacrifice, and the salvation and help of others will be there. In the Saddharma-Puṇḍarika, *e.g.* the following Buddha words are related : "O Śāriputra, the true doctrine as encompassed by the Tathāgata cannot be argued ; it transcends the limits of (mere rational) thought. Why ? Because the Tathāgata appears in the world to achieve a great purpose, viz. to bring about that all living beings will accept, understand, see and penetrate the knowledge and insight won by the Tathāgata, so as to make them enter the Path of Insight reached by Him. They will then achieve his Bodhi, his perfect cosmic-spiritual insight."

In view of this common feature of love and compassion, it seems to be all the more paradoxical that the Mahāyāna scriptures form one long accusation, denigration and rejection, frequently strongly worded, of the alleged selfish pursuits of the Hīnayāna Buddhists, the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. There is no doubt a historical basis for this accusing attitude. Asceticism and the urge to be away from the often miserable social, economic and political conditions were widespread in ancient India. On the other hand, the spiritual and religious needs of the masses were great. Moreover, there was an ever recurring tension between the monastic orders, the Sangha and the lay-communities. Nevertheless, it seems to be wrong to identify early Theravāda Buddhism with Hīnayāna. In spite of unmistakable philosophical differences, Mahāyāna and especially the altruistic side of Theravāda Buddhism form in essence an "Ekayāna," a unique path destined for the spiritual welfare of mankind. And this is true for every form of altruistic Buddhism. Regardless of nītārtha and neyārtha, direct and indirect-implied forms of preaching, the famous words of the Buddha recorded in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta are entirely appropriate in this context : "I have preached the doctrine, without making any distinction between within and without ; the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back."

What then is the creative force of Buddhism ? This question must be asked, because, without exception, all its different forms propound the theory of anityatā, *i.e.* of the basic and universal impermanence of all phenomenal life. It is one of the cardinal Buddhist conceptions. In addition, especially at a later stage of Buddhist philosophical developments (Diṅnāga, Dharmakīrti, etc.), the kṣaṇika-vāda, the radical theory of momentariness or instantaneous being, was elaborated. The roots of this theory are already present in the Nikāyas, in the Pāli Abhidhamma and in the Sanskrit Abhidharma. Superficially speaking, such a philosophy leaves hardly room for creative effort. For this needs time and duration to materialize. And indeed, Kamalāsīla in his commentary on the Tattvasaṃgraha, records the following words of the Buddha : "All forces are instantaneous. But how can a thing which has no duration nevertheless have the time to produce something ?" And the following answer then is given : "This is because what we call 'existence' is nothing but efficiency (artha-kriyākāritva) and it is this very efficiency which is called a creative cause."[5] It is not necessary to discuss within the context of this article the intricacies of this difficult theory. But briefly a few points may be raised. All human creative activity is the resultant of spiritual tension, impulse, will and concentrated effort. It is invariably the final stage of an intense development which is its causal determinant. The essence of real creation, however, is "novelty," *i.e.* a "break" or transformation of the preceding causal pattern. This can only be brought about by "vision" or "enlightenment." For no creative effort is possible without vision, thought, mindfulness, discipline and skill. In the vision the idea and the "truth" of the object to be created is born. By penetrating thought and concentrated mindfulness it is endowed with concrete form. By discipline and skill, inspired by the efficiency of the idea, it is carried into effect. Only when these factors are present in a balanced fusion, man is able to "create," *i.e.* at once to break an old and to make a new causal pattern, whether objectively in art and science or subjectively in the conscious transformation of his own life. Above all, creativity requires "personality." Without stretching things all too far, one may maintain that all these factors are, somehow, present in Buddhist philosophy as a whole. True, all forms of Buddhism teach the anātman—or anattavāda.

3. Cf. P. D. Mehta, Early Indian Religious Thought, London 1956, p. 238. The author thoroughly disagrees with this negative approach. In a hundred pages he has given one of the most lucid expositions of Theravāda Buddhism.

4. Subha Sutta, M.N.

5. Cf. Th. Stcherbatsky, Buddhist Logic, Leningrad 1932, vol. I, p. 119 and Śāntarakṣita, Tattvasaṃgraha, Baroda 1926, vol. I, p. 10.

This is mostly wrongly translated as the theory of the denial or negation of the "soul." This has led to the apparent conclusion that Buddhist philosophy rejects the idea of the "personality." This theory has its corollary in the "dharmanairātmya" concept which denies "substance" to all "things." Although, indeed, the literal translation of "anatta" or "anātman" is non-soul or negation of the soul, this expression has different overtones of meaning in Buddhist Sanskrit and Pali, on the one hand, and in English (or other European languages), on the other hand. In English it expresses a negation. In Buddhist terminology it points to the dynamic qualities of the personality. For Buddhism maintains that the empirical soul is not a "thing," a static substance (dravya), but a dynamic stream of consciousness (vijñānasaṃtāna, cittasaṃtāna). Each moment of this stream is subject to "impermanence." But in its causal efficiency, it gives form to the next moment. The "stream," therefore, is itself a potential source of constant mental and spiritual regeneration, which is something entirely different from a mere "negation of the soul." Neither the figure of the Buddha himself, nor the "Arahant" and "Bodhisattva" ideals are in keeping with such a denial. Rather, they are the most perfect fulfilment of the idea of personality.

Essentially, the "vision" is given in the idea of the Bodhi, the Enlightenment. For this is at once a transcendent supra-rational experience and a penetrating view of life in its real nature. The Bodhi is primarily associated with the exalted figure of the Buddha himself. But in so far as the Tathāgata is the great example for all human beings who follow in his wake, it is potentially present in them. This idea has been more fully worked out in Mahāyāna philosophy, but it is not absent from the Theravāda doctrine. Furthermore, to a very large extent, a main concern of Buddhist philosophy (and psychology) has been the study of the human mind as well as of the nature of thought. Here again, one can trace a paradoxical development. There is no doubt that already in early Buddhism the "mind" occupied a fundamental and central position, at a later stage giving rise to the Yogācāra-vijñānavāda idealism. We read *e.g.* in the Dhammapada I, 1 and 2: "All our tendencies of character are the offspring of mind, dominated by mind and made up of mind. If a man speaks or acts with a sullied mind, then suffering follows him, even as the wheel of the wagon follows the hoof of the bullock . . . If a man speaks or acts with an unsullied mind, then happiness follows him ever, just as his shadow." And in the Kevaddha Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya it is said":

> "There is not that earth, water, fire and wind,
> And long and short, and fine and coarse,
> Pure and impure, no footing find.
> There is not that both name and form
> Die out, leaving no place behind.
> When intellection ceases they all also cease."[6]

In the Anguttara Nikāya we read: "Verily, I declare to you, my friend, that within this very body, mortal as it is and only a fathom high, but conscious and endowed with mind, is the world, and the waxing thereof, and the waning thereof, and the way that leads to the passing away thereof."[7] Moreover, the position of viññāna-vijñāna in the twelve-fold causal series or the place of "right views" and "right mindfulness" in the graded scale of the Noble Eightfold Path, they all indicate the paramount importance of mind and thought in Buddhist philosophy. No wonder that many centuries later the famous Buddhist logician Diṅnāga opened his Pramāṇa-Sammuccaya with the following dedication verse: "I salute Him, who pursues the weal of the living beings, the Teacher, the Blessed One, the Protector, Him who is Logic Incarnate (pramāṇabhūta)."[8] In spite of this glorification of logic (and this seems to be the paradox), in all forms of Buddhism, mere rational thought and philosophical speculation for the sake of speculation leading to "opinions" and false "views," are rejected in the most emphatic way. ". . . some recluse or brāhman is addicted to logic and reasoning. He gives utterance to the following conclusions of his own, beaten out by his argumentations and based on his sophistry . . .," we read in the Brahmajāla Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya (I.23). In the first book of Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakosa this attitude is summed up as follows: "There are two roots of disputation (vivādamūla): Attachment to pleasures and attachment to opinions (dṛṣṭi). "Sensations" and "Ideas" are respectively the principal causes of these roots. Truly, if one is attached to pleasures it is because one experiences sensations; if one is attached to opinions, it is because of holding false views or notions (viparītasaṃjñā). Sensation and Thought are the causes of the Saṃsāra; he who is desirous of sensation and whose ideas are erroneous is caught in transmigration."[9] In Sthiramati's Madhyānta-vibhāgaṭīkā it is explicitly stated that conceptual thinking belongs to the sphere of (transcendental) illusion.[10] And in the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra, the Buddha says with regard to the realization of the Absolute (Tathatā): "I am fully enlightened concerning the Absolute, the character of which transcends all philosophical speculation. Fully enlightened, I address the people, I preach, I explain, I teach and I reveal. Because, as I have said: The Saints know the Absolute by Intuition; for the common man, philosophical speculation is a matter of tradition. So you know by this argument that the Absolute transcends all speculation. The Absolute is not the object of ideas; speculation is attained by ideas. The Absolute is inexpressible; speculation belongs to the domain of words. The Absolute escapes every-day vulgar experience; speculation is the object of vulgar experience. The Absolute is beyond all controversy; speculation is the object of controversial opinions.[11] Finally, Nāgār-

6. Dialogues of the Buddha, Part I, p. 284.
7. Cf. P. T. Raju, Idealistic Thought of India, London 1953, p. 200.
8. Rahula, S., Pramā navārttikam, Introd. p. III, J.B.O.R.S., vol. 24, 1938; E. Obermiller, History of Buddhism by Bu-ston, Heidelberg, 1931/32, vol. II, p. 150.
9. Vasubandhu, Abhidharmakośa, French translation by L. de la Vallée-Poussin, Brussels 1923-1931, vol. I, p. 41; see also D.N. III, 246.
10. S. Yamaguchi, Madhyāntavibhāgatīkā, Nagoya 1934, p. 50; Th. Stcherbatsky, Madhyānta-Vibhanga, English Translation, Leningrad 1936, p. 82 (41.20).
11. E. Lamotte, Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra, Tibetan Text and French translation, Paris 1935, p. 173.

juna, with a paraphrase of a verse (824) in the Suttanipāta, exclaims :

" Everybody speaks of an Absolute,
Everybody is passionately attached to his idea.
One asserts this, and another that,
But nothing of all this is absolute.

These philosophers engage in controversial disputes,
Discussing their reasons and arguments.
Now they may agree and then again disagree.
Victor or vanquished in the disputation,
They taste joy or sorrow.

If they remain victorious, they tumble into the ditch of pride,
If vanquished they are imprisoned in sorrow.
For this reason, sages keep away from these futile disputes.[12]

It is clear then, that Buddhism both accepts and rejects rational and logical thinking. It rejects it where it is purely subjective and speculative, not matched by the real state of things (yathābhūtam), *i.e.* non-empirical, and not leading to the fulfilment of the higher stages of the Path or to life in its higher spiritual form. In other words, it rejects it where it is sterile and futile. However, it accepts rational thought where it leads to a higher and comprehensive view of life, that is where it is truly creative. Buddhism would not have had its long vigorous philosophical development—based on a progressive internal criticism of ideas which lasted through many centuries—without its exact and penetrating logical and epistemological side. Even Nāgārjuna, the radical critic of all logic and philosophy, is strictly analytical in his criticism. He was certainly one of the founders of Indian logic. The pillar of all Buddhist philosophy is its causal theory (pratītyasamutpāda). It is itself logically established. Especially at a later stage, this theory was further elaborated in terms of causal efficiency (artha-kriyā-kāritva). Kamalaśīla observes in this respect : " Among all the jewels of Buddhist philosophy its theory of causation is the chief jewel " and " whatever exists is a cause, cause and existence are synonymous " (yā bhūtiḥ saiva kriyā).[13] Indeed, in Buddhism life is seen as causally co-ordinated (pratītyasamutpanna). This causality is inexorable. In its natural flow, therefore, life may have a rigid, deterministic, mechanical quality, incompatible with the freedom which is a main prerequisite for all creative efforts. However, when life is guided by the intensive stimulus of the disciplined and enlightened mind, it achieves freedom and becomes productive and creative. Mere (causally determined) change then becomes purposeful transmutation and impermanence a means to the dynamic rhythm and renewal of creative activity. It is on the basis of these principles that Buddhist philosophy as well as Buddhist history must be approached. One need only look at what remains of the countless monuments of worship built during the flourishing periods of Buddhist civilization to realize this. For true creative vision is manifest in India, in monuments from Bharhut, Sanchi, and Bodh Gaya to Ajanta and Nalanda, in Ceylon from Anuradhapura to Polonnaruwa and Mihintale, in Java from the Borobudur to Candi Kalasan, in all the other Asian countries in temples and stūpas too numerous to mention here. A pilgrim, making the pradaṣkiṇa of the Borobudur in Java, is not likely to forget his experience. This magnificent Śailendra monument is, perhaps, the most perfect representation in stone of the Buddhist doctrine in all its aspects and possibilities. It is based on the fundamental Mahāyāna idea that Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra are one, and that there is therefore no escape from life to reach spiritual salvation. This means that the endless richness and variety of the phenomenal world and the ultimate reality of the pure, inexpressible Absolute are one in essence. But this fundamental unity, although ever present, must be realized by conquering one's own passions and ignorance. At the same time, Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra being one, the Path to this goal is not only an individual, it is also a cosmic process. It is the Path of all humanity. The Borobudur, therefore, which has been built on the basis of the combined architectural principles of a Stūpa and a Maṇḍala, is itself a representation " sub specie aeternitatis " of the Universe. This is symbolized by the different groups of Buddhas which adorn the monument in all directions. On its graded terraces, it graphically demonstrates the Path one has to go. These terraces are adorned by long series of reliefs which, in their tender beauty, create a sphere of holiness reminding one of the great masterpieces of the early Italian and Flemish schools of painting. They form true works of art. Here we see depicted, on its lower terraces, the workings of the inexorable law of karma, the inspiring life of the Buddha as described in the Lalitavistara, and many instructive episodes from his previous births, teaching the lesson of love and compassion. These reliefs are themselves symbolic of the manifoldness and variety of life. The higher terraces culminate in the great Stūpa which symbolizes the Pure, Unique Absolute, the Ultimate of Transcendent Reality, *i.e.* transcendent to limited understanding, but immanent in life itself. Here again, symbolically, these higher terraces are entirely devoid of all adornment. Scholars have now established, that this monument was likewise meant as a glorification of the king who built it. This is in keeping with the ancient God-King concept, then prevalent in South East Asia. This very fact is perhaps one more symbolic indication of the essential unity of Ultimate Reality and life as it is lived. The Borobudur has the advantage that it is better preserved than many other famous ancient monuments. In its present condition it is not a ruin. But, fundamentally, the same ideal harmony and the same creative power shine forth from the Buddhist monuments of India and Ceylon, even from those on which the impact of " anityatā " has been far stronger. Especially the daring grandeur of the monuments of Anuradhapura—which, thanks to the ingenuity and devoted work of Ceylonese archaeologists, have been wrested again from the jungle—is suggestive of this sacred sphere in the midst of life, and of the creative vision of the architects and of the kings who gave the impetus to their erection. For Buddhist creative activity is also manifest in the salutary influence which the Saddharma or Buddhadhamma exerted on the conduct of kings and rulers who came under the sway of its spiritual force. The Emperor Asoka is perhaps the most illustrious ruler, in whom this beneficent influence became manifest, but he was by no means the only one. Many of Lanka's ancient kings furnish us

12. E.Lamotte, Traite de la Grande Vertu de la Sagesse, French translation of Nāgārjuna's Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra, Louvain 1946.

13. Cf. Th. Stcherbatsky, Buddhist Logic, vol. I, p. 119 f.

with outstanding examples of this enlightened conduct. The Buddhist doctrine is characterized by its therapeutical qualities. This becomes apparent even from the way in which the four Noble Truths (āryasatya) are formulated. For it is not suffering, but the overcoming of suffering which the doctrine teaches. The Buddha himself has become known, throughout Asia, as the Bhaisajyaguru, the master who, in his compassion, methodically cures the ills and sorrows of mankind and of all living beings. This spirit is again strikingly reflected in the conduct of those kings who built resthouses, and hospitals, bringing healing to man and animal alike.

Finally, the creative power of Buddhism emerges above all from the superabundant mass of literary and philosophical writings it produced during many centuries and from the fascinating history of its own development during the first millennium of its spread in India and Ceylon and subsequently to nearly all parts of Asia. Between the time of the Buddha's own teaching—the chief Kathāvatthu of modern Buddhology—and the rise of Mahāyāna, there is a transitional period of approximately 500 years. It is the bridging period of the great councils, of the early schisms and of the sects and philosophical schools. This period of the early sects has been described as one of sterile scholastic quibbling and of pseudo-logical hairsplitting. Mahāyāna, on the other hand, with its important philosophical systems (Mādhyamika, Vijñānavāda), has been called a perversion and degeneration of the pure, original doctrine. And internally within the Buddhist sphere, the Hīnayāna-Mahāyāna antithesis is indicative of an "orthodox-heterodox" conflict by which, invariably, all world religions have been plagued. Happily, one may say that this conflict did not lead to the intolerant outrages of so many other religions. The idea of the "Ekayāna" was somehow always present. Rather, this conflict was a stimulus to philosophical development. The period of the sects was the formative period of Buddhist philosophy. In due course, it gave rise to many sharply contradictory philosophical and religious approaches, such as empiricism and intuitionalism; realism and idealism; pluralism and monism; rationalism and mysticism; philosophical independence and religious faith. Far from being a "perversion" of the original doctrine, this great variety of philosophical opinion shows the dynamic creative character of Buddhism as a whole. This development was set in motion by the original swinging of the wheel of the doctrine (dharmacakrapravartana), whatever that doctrine may have been. In their search for truth, the Buddhist philosophers followed the way of all true philosophy, which can only progress by renewed constructive criticism and the "vision" of new ideas. The Buddha refused to give an answer to a number of metaphysical questions, the so-called avyākṛta-vastu, concerning the eternity and non-eternity, the infinity and non-infinity of the world, the identity or non-identity of soul and body and others. For these questions did not lead to the higher stages of the Path. However, even of the things the Tathāgata had realized and set forth, he said that they were "profound, difficult to realize, hard to understand, tranquilizing, sweet, not to be grasped by mere logic."[14] On the other hand, his fina exhortation to his disciples was: "Strive on with diligence." and indeed, this has been the way of Buddhism, to strive diligently for understanding of the profundity and difficulty of the doctrine. Even if one cannot subscribe to all the theories which were developed, one must admit that the original doctrine must have had an enormous creative and stimulating power. In an Aśoka edict (Bairat) we read with regard to the Buddhavacanam: "All that is spoken by the Blessed Buddha is well spoken." The Buddhists themselves were aware of the extraordinary variety of opinion concerning the fundamental doctrines as well as of the discrepancies and conflicting statements ascribed to the Buddha. A reconciliation was attempted by a reversion of the preceding statement, viz.: "All that is well spoken is spoken by the Buddha."[15] We may then ask: What is real Buddhism? Perhaps it is all summed up in the frequently quoted verse:

> "To avoid sin, to practice virtue and the good, to purify one's mind such is the doctrine of the Buddha.

END OF 2,500TH BUDDHA JAYANTI

By Ven'ble NELUWE JINARATANA MAHASTHAVIRA

THE 2500th Buddha Jayanti year is now drawing to a close. Perhaps never before in the history of India—certainly not in modern India has such nation wide enthusiasm been shown in connection with an event of purely religious significance.

2500 years ago did the Buddha, the Lion of the Sakyas, after spending five and forty years preaching to gods and men the Truth He had discovered under the Bodhi-tree, Gaya, pass away into the utter peace, the unfathomable stillness, of the Mahaparinirvana.

Before going, as He lay outstretched between the twin Sal trees, He uttered His last words of advice and exhortation to his disciples: Appamādēna Sampādētha, "Strive on with heedfulness."

For five and twenty centuries have these noble words rung in the ears of humanity. They have hunted us all during the past years. we hear them today too, as the 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebrations at last drew to an end.

Never before has mankind so much needed to listen to those words as now. "Be mindful—that is the Buddha's advice to a world intoxicated by greed and mad with hate. "Strive on"—this is His exhortation to a generation which, active as

14. Brahmajāla Sutta, D.N., I.22.
15. E. Lamotte, Traite . . ., vol. I, p. 80 f.

it is in doing all that is evil has grown almost incapable of doing good. The future seems dark. Yet in the midst of that darkness shines a great light—the Light of the Buddha's Teaching.

Let us, at the end of this 2500th Buddha Jayanti Years, resolve that we shall try to spread that light among mankind, so that hate may be replaced by love, war by peace, fear and distrust by perfect mutual faith and security.

Let us, at the same time, remember the Lord Buddha's sublime message, repeated a thousand times in the course of His Career, that we should work for "the good, the welfare, the happiness of many people." Let us remember all the under-privileged who need our aid.

Wishing you the Blessings of the Lord Buddha.

BUDDHISM IN COUNTRIES OUTSIDE CEYLON

Buddhist Awakening in India

I AM not sure if the Buddhist in Ceylon are conscious or even aware of the exact nature and situation of the new Buddhist renaissance in India. Our belief that the 2500th year of the passing away of our Lord Buddha, will usher in "a new Buddhist era," as far as India is concerned, has come out literally true.

Ever since the great Indian Revolutionary, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, embraced Buddhism, and particularly after his sudden passing away, there is hardly a day, when some Indians do not get themselves converted to Buddhism, at some place or other.

As a result of these mass conversion in different parts of the country, I presume, that the numerical strength of the Buddhists, may have surpassed even the number of Buddhists in Ceylon.

It is not only the "Hindoos" who are embracing Buddhism, but a considerable number of "Christian" also have become "Buddhists."

The movement is as strong among women folk as among men.

The reason for this "miracle" taking place in modern India is twofold: (1) The social injustice of the caste-ridden Hindoos; (2) The conviction that all the "Untouchables" are none else than the descendants of their ancient Buddhist forefathers.

It is a pity that the press in India has not been able to extend even the deserved journalistic courtsey to this new movement. But the world is bound to learn of it and affected by it sooner or later.

I suggest that some competent correspondents should be sent from countries such as Ceylon to report a trustworthy account of this new Buddhist movement.

It is a matter for great satisfaction that India has got a prime Minister, who is most favourably inclined towards the propagation of the teachings of the Buddha. No doubt, people are sympathetic, but the opposition of the traditional orthodoxy and also of the vested-interests is still there.

It is natural that like the Buddhist of all countries, Buddhists in Ceylon also should rejoice over such news. A concrete expression of their delight, is bound to help the movement which can take some of the following forms :—

(1) Such organisations, who have received free gifts of lands from different people may be helped to build Buddhist temples over them.

(2) Such institutions, who like to print and distribute Buddhist books to new converts, may be helped to bring out such books. Cheaper editions of Buddhist books should be preferred to just "free" distribution.

(3) Some Buddhist leaders from Ceylon should find time to visit these new Buddhist centres and also invite Buddhist workers from India to attend Buddhist functions here in Ceylon.

(4) Our Ven'ble Bhikkhus, should, when they go as pilgrims stay in India for longer periods and do some preaching and teaching also.

(5) Training centres for Buddhist workers should be started and maintained both in Ceylon and India.

At Sarnath

THE message of Buddha—The only way to human happiness. "Man does not need material progress alone. The urge for the emancipation from sorrow and suffering is something instinctive in him. In the present context of things, the message of Buddha alone can confer upon man an everlasting happiness," thus were the observations made by Sri Achut Raa Patwardhan—a leading thinker of our time in the course of his presidential address at a largely attended public meeting held in a big Shamiana put up specially for the purpose on the lawns of the Mulagandha Kuti Vihara, Sarnath, on the occasion of the celebration of the concluding session of the 2500th Buddha Jayanti on the 13th May.

The learned speaker went on to say that human life is a success only if man is able to gain conquest over his selfishness and temptations. These were indeed great problems over which the enlightened one pondered and also discovered a solution to them. Buddha laid special emphasis upon meditation which according to him can be the greatest source of inspiration and stimulation to human mind. Sri Patwardhan told further that greater happiness can emerge from purification of heart and clarification of thought than all that wealth and material progress can confer. The message of Buddhism really has that purifying influence and illumines the human mind and guide us to the path of an everlasting bliss.

Speeches were also delivered by Dr. Rajbali Pande of the Banaras Hindu University, Dr. Ramdhar Misra and other distinguished scholars from India and abroad. The proceedings of the meeting came to an end after Ven'ble M. Sanghartana Thera, Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society has thanked the Central, and the State governments and all those who had extended their co-operation towards the successful conclusion of the Buddha Jayanti.

Earlier the celebrations of the day had started with a Prabhatpheri

early in the morning. After the exposition of the holy relics the fruits were distributed among the sick. At noon 'Dāna' was given to the Bhikkhus.

The main attraction on the following day was a symposium held under the presidentship of Dr. Mangal Deo Shastri on "Contributions of Buddhism toward the welfare of Present Indian Society" in which besides others participated Rev. Revata from Ceylon, Sri U. N. Pande, Sri P. D. Singha and Prof. Upadhaya. Concluding the symposium Dr. Shastri told that Buddhism can go a long way to remove many of the evils existing in the Modern Hindu Society. He dealt at length the great evils that Casteism brought in its wake and advised people to rise above all these and work for the solidarity of the Society.

In the night the Mūlagandha Kūṭi was tastefully illumined.

Vesak in Paris

THE "Friends of Buddhism" held Wesak celebrations in Paris on Sunday, May 12th and Monday, May 13th.

Like last year, the Meditation Room was open during seven hours to all those wishing to offer to the Buddha the homage of their meditation, and many more people than last year were to come and meditate before the statue of the Buddha, surrounded with flowers and light. It was a homage of pure and noble dignity.

Venerable Amritananda Sthavira of Nepal gave the Precepts twice during the afternoon and also a lesson to the constant flow of people who came to meditate in the Meditation Room. At 9 p.m. Venerable Dr. Rahula came and gave the Precepts again and addressed a few words to those present. Some of our members remained all afternoon and evening meditating or reading in our library. It was, for many, a day of profound and sincere homage to the Buddha.

On the evening of Monday, May 13th, at 9 p.m., we gave a public meeting in the big lecture hall of the Musee Guimet under the auspices of His Excellency Major-General Chai Prathipasen, A ambassador of Thailand in Paris. The 2500th anniversary of the Buddha was celebrated this year by Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. The three diplomatic representatives of these countries were asked to speak.

On the platform a beautiful bronze statue of the Buddha, kindly lent for the occasion by the Directors of the Museum, Mr. P. Stern and Miss J. Auboyer, was surrounded by yellow roses and in front of Him, as on an alter in Thailand, were placed candlesticks and a bowl of rice containing tapers of incense, and a tray of flowers among the garlands of white and orange flowers. To the right of the statue were Venerable Amritananda Sthavir of Nepal, Venerable Shin Kelasa and Venerable Dr. W. Rahula. To the left of the statue, near His Excellency the Ambassador of Thailand, who presided, were His Excellency the Ambassador of Laos and Mr. Poc Thieun, Charge d' Affaires of the Cambodian Embassy.

The flower offering was presented by a charming young Thai girl, Miss Nuanchan Watanakun, and received by the three Venerable Bhikkhus. Then the three Ambassadors pronounced their speeches, uniting us in thought with the magnificent celebrations taking place at the same time in their far-away lands. Professor P. Mus, of the College de France, gave a short speech which was followed by a religious Buddhist chant recorded in India. Four of our members, Mr. Goury, Mr. Barbarin, Mr. Coulon and Mr. Marc, then read passages from the Suttas on the Birth, the Enlightenment and the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, along with messages sent by Mahathera Narada and Professor J. Filliozat who, as the guest of the Royal Government of Cambodia, was taking part in the celebrations in Phnom Penh. Then followed a beautiful Song for Wesak sung by a group of Thai students. After the recitation of the three Homages by the Venerable Bhikkhus our President, Miss G. Constant Lounsbery, B.Sc., expressed her heart-felt thanks for the collaboration given us by the Embassy of Thailand in organizing the meeting end for the help extended to Madame La Fuente by Mr. P. Maolanon and Mr. Watanakun and for the songs and recitations by the young Thai students. Our President also gratefully thanked the Government of Thailand which, on the request of His Excellency the Ambassador, sent us for this beautiful Fete of Wesak a generous gift to enable us to publish the second volume of the French translation of the Suttas of Majjhima Nikaya, the first volume having been already published through the generosity of the Royal Government of Thailand.

The evening closed by the recitation of the Metta Sutta in Pali by a choir of young Thai students, young boys and girls whose sweet voices filled the hall singing the noble words of the Sutta.

Among the many distinguished guests of the evening were the Minister of Burma and the First Secretary U Ba Yi, the Charge d' Affaires of Ceylon, Mr. W. L. B. Mendis and Mrs. Mendis, Mr. R. Jeudy from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Henry Holland of the Australian Embassy, the First Secretary of the Indian Embassy, Mr. and Mrs. A. Bareau, Mr. Ph. Stern, Director of the Musee Guimet, together with our members and our many friends. We are very happy that Wesak has once again been celebrated in France in deep sincerity and beauty.

LATE SIR ERNEST DE SILVA

MAY I express to your Society my sincerest sympathy on the great loss you have suffered through the demise of your President, Sir Ernest de Silva. May I also use the hospitality of the columns of your magazine, and add a few words of my remembrance of the departed one. My bond with him was a quite unusual and very personal one. Though a monk feels rather reluctant to speak about personal matters in public, there are, however, several reasons which induce me to do so.

There is first a feeling of deep gratitude for two things belonging to the very greatest which one human being can do for another one. As to the first of these two things: it was the dear departed one and Lady Evadne de Silva who actually saved my aged mother's life and made it a very happy one until its peaceful end. When, in 1938, waves of cruel persecutions surged over Central Europe, heralding the coming second world war, my mother, too, like millions of

others, was in dire need of a haven of safety. In that contingency, Sir Ernest and Lady de Silva secured for her the permission to come to Lanka, and they most cordially received her in their home where for 17 years she was treated in the most loving manner like a member of the family, until she died in 1956, aged 89. Without that act of generosity, she would, very probably, have fallen a victim of the persecutions (like other relatives of mine) or she may have perished in the world war that broke out soon after her arrival in Lanka.

That very act of generosity made it possible for me to continue my life in the Sangha, thanks to the fact that the dear departed one and Lady de Silva had taken over voluntarily and so lovingly my duties of a son. To enable another being to lead the life of a Bhikkhu is certainly one of the most precious gifts that can be bestowed upon him. Hence, any merit acquired in my life as a monk, is the rightful share of those two noble ones. May it accrue to their happiness and be a condition of their final attainment of Nibbana !

Thoughtful kindness was one of the characteristic traits of the departed one. I had occasion to see and to learn so many instances of it, shown to my mother and many others. It is true, kindness is generally one of the outstanding qualities of the people of Lanka, and is certainly more fundamental to their nature than, what we may hope is only a passing wave of increased criminality. Yet, compared to an *impulsive* type of kindness, *thoughtful* kindness has everywhere and always been a rather rare quality. It goes hand in hand with that unostentatious and wisely applied liberality which has been praised by many others as a distinctive virtue of the departed one. Both traits are salient features of the true gentleman and nobleman,

Late Sir Ernest de Silva,
who was elected President of the Colombo Y.M.B.A. on 21st July, 1944

i.e., one who is truly gentle and noble—a " sappurisa," in the Buddhist sense. Both these traits are a more valuable and longer-lasting equipment for the journey through the Samsara, and are more conducive to reaching the end of it, than a purely sentimental, or even showy piety which may well be quite sincere, but rarely reaches deep enough for shaping character.

A few years ago, I was favoured to receive the citizenship of Lanka, together with my revered teacher, the Venerable Nyanatiloka Maha Thera. That treasured document, making me an " adopted son of Lanka," received, I feel, additional meaning and " life-blood " for me through my close and rather unusual bond with the departed one and his family. There was an additional connection worth mentioning. It was Lady Evadne de Silva who generously acquired, and offered to the Sangha, one of the twin-islands which form the " Island Hermitage " at Dodanduwa. Always ready to help, she saved a rather unpleasant situation when that island was about to be sold to a non-Buddhist, which would have made the position of the monks at the other island rather awkward. It was at that very island where I spent the first happy months in Lanka, in 1936.

Reflecting on that strange series of events which brought myself and my late mother into such a close and happy relationship to Lanka, its religion, and to one of its noble families, I cannot but ascribe it to an old karmic bond forged in earlier lives. Believing that others too may find it stimulative of Saddha and thought-provoking, it was for me an additional reason for telling that episode in the life of a noble-minded son of Lanka whose memory I shall always treasure.

NYANAPONIKA THERA.

Vesak, 1957.

BOOK REVIEW

A Survey of Buddhism, *by Bhiksu Sangharaksita,* published by the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore, India, 1957, 500 pp.

BHIKSU Sangharaksita's book which contains the text of four lectures delivered under the auspices of the Indian Institute of World Culture in July, 1954, is a significant contribution to the interpretation of Buddhism in our time. The merits of this publication are easily recognisable. It is an extremely readable survey of a vast and complex subject and the author's sytle, which is at once lucid and flowing, is one that recommends itself to all writers on philosophy and religion. In Ceylon writers who claim to expound to us the fundamental philosophy of the Buddha generally and invariably impose on us a straight-jacket statement of what are called the undiluted principles of Theravāda Buddhism. Such writers are easily apt to mistake particular historical and sectarian tendencies in this school of Buddhism for general and fundamental principles. This is why Bhiksu Sangharaksita's book should be of particular interest and appeal to Ceylonese students of Buddhism. His book offers a corrective to every attempt at the lop-sided interpretation of the history and philosophy of Buddhism. He is not obsessed by sectarian predispositions in the presentation of his facts or in their interpretation. He is interested in Buddhism *as a whole* and he is certainly capable, by virtue of his breadth of vision and depth of understanding, of succeeding in freeing many Buddhists from the fetters of sectarianism and in weaning them away from rutting in conventional grooves of parochial belief.

It seems to me that the author is fundamentally correct in his interpretation and re-construction of the original teaching of the Buddha. The critical research into original and late Buddhism on the part of modern scholarship tends to confirm the basic assumptions of

the author. Contrary to the widely held belief especially among Theravadins the philosophical development of Buddhism in the Mahāyāna is not a degeneration of Buddhist thought. The multi-petalled lotus of the Dharma fully unfolds itself only in the course of its logical and historical development. The author is likely to agree to this view for he shows us, clearly and convincingly, that Nāgārjunā's exposition of Buddhist philosophy constitutes a return to the original teaching of the Buddha.

Buddhism, whatever else it might be or might have been, is a movement that has occurred in history. In spite of its spatial and temporal extensions Buddhism preserves its necessary and basic unity. "The unity of Buddhism consists in the fact, that through differences and divergencies of doctrine innumerable, all schools of Buddhism aim at enlightenment, at reproducing the spiritual experience of the Buddha. The Dharma is therefore to be defined, not so much in terms of this or that particular teaching, but rather as the sum total of the means whereby that experience may be attained. Hence it can even be considered as being in principle and function, though not always in institutional form and specific intellectual content, as identical for all schools of Buddhism."

Bhiksu Sangharaksita is to be congratulated on his great qualities as a writer. The book has been written in such a way that it can be read equally profitably by the average layman as well as by the expert. For the correct understanding of the totality of Buddhism this book is, as far as I am aware, one of the best so far made available to us in the English language, if not the best. All who seek to understand Buddhism should read this book. It is certainly the best gift that has come our way during the Buddha Jayanti.

Dr. W. S. KARUNARATNE.

University of Ceylon,
Peradeniya.

THE COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

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RE-UNION DINNER

ARRANGED by the Dramatic Activities Branch of the Y.M.B.A., Colombo has been fixed for Saturday, 22nd June, 1957, at 7.30 p.m., at the Association Hall.

Tickets at the rate of Rs. 2/- per person are obtainable from the General Office or from—

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Dramatic Activities Branch.

Members Elected On 8.4.57 : W. A. Leslie de Alwis, 186, Galle Road, Colombo 4 ; K. G. Amaradasa, 52, Sri Sangharaja Mawata, Colombo 10.

Member Elected On 20.4.57 : Noel Wickremesinghe, 32, 27th Lane, Off Inner Flower Road, Colombo 7.

Members Elected On 22.4.57 : M. E. Fernando, Royal College, Colombo ; B. S. Fernando, 217, Cotta Road, Colombo 8 ; T. K. Viswanathan, 55/1, Pansala Road, Colombo 13 ; Dr. H. C. H. Soysa, 7, Greenlands Avenue, Colombo 5.

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All members are kindly requested to donate at least one year's membership fee to the Fort Branch Building Fund, and enrol a new member each month.

For particulars please write

Hony. General Secretary,
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Colombo.

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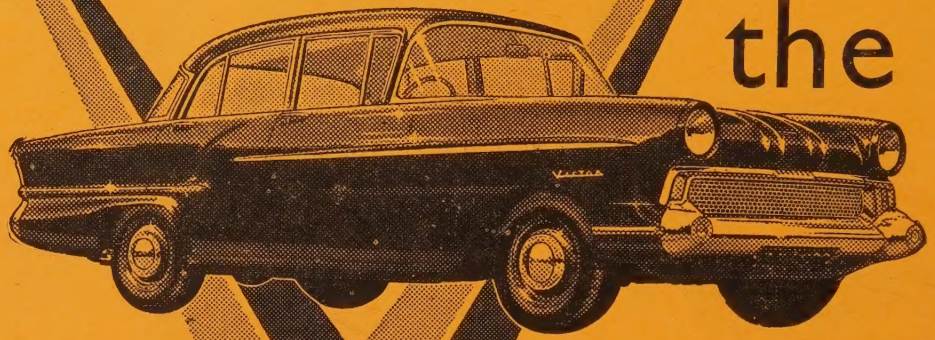

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